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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/064,235	06/24/2002	H. Randall Craig	HRCM.P-004	6384
21121	7590	12/01/2004	EXAMINER	
OPPEDAHL AND LARSON LLP P O BOX 5068 DILLON, CO 80435-5068			MENDOZA, MICHAEL G	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3731	

DATE MAILED: 12/01/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	S CRAIG, H. RANDALL
	10/064,235	Michael G. Mendoza	
Examiner	Art Unit		3731

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 08 July 2004.
 2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-15 and 17-19 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) 11-15 and 17-19 is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 1 and 4-10 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) 2,3 and 5 is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on 16 September 2002 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	Paper No(s)/Mail Date: _____
3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date: _____	5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
	6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Arguments

1. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-15 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Drawings

2. The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Therefore, the wrapper must be shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claim(s). No new matter should be entered.

Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as "amended." If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. The replacement sheet(s) should be labeled "Replacement Sheet" in the page header (as per 37 CFR 1.84(c)) so as not to obstruct any portion of the drawing figures. If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

3. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

4. Claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

5. Claim 5 recites the limitation "the extensions" in line 1. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

6. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

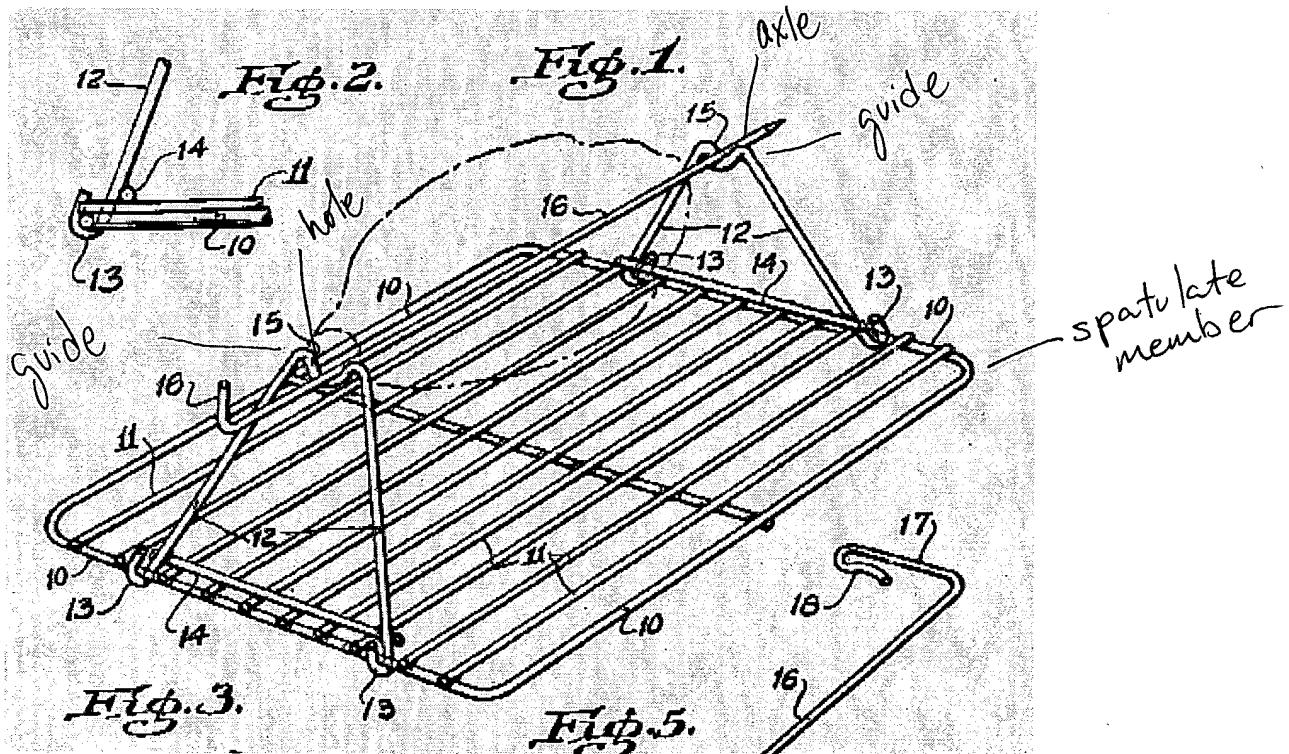
A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

7. Claims 1, 4, 6, and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Irwin 2634674.

8. Irwin teaches an apparatus having a first end and a second end, the first end comprising a spatulate member having a length along a first axis; the second end comprising a guide shaped to receive a cylindrical axle for rotation on a second axis, the guide shaped to constrain the first axis in fixed position relative to the second axis, the first and second axes constrained to lie within a single plane; the spatulate member extending in a first direction and a second direction from the first axis, the first direction and second direction being on opposite sides of the plane; wherein the guide comprises

two member each extending toward the second axis from the first axis, each of the two member having a hole shaped to receive the cylindrical axle; wherein the spatulate member is symmetric relative to the first axis; further characterized as made of metal.



Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

9. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

10. Claim 7-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Irwin.

11. As to claim 7, Irwin teaches an apparatus made of metal. It should be noted that Irwin fails to specifically teach where the apparatus is sterile. However, the metal of Irwin is fully capable of being made sterile.

12. As to claim 8, Irwin fails to teach wherein the apparatus is surrounded by a wrapper. However, it is well known to surround a product in a box or a plastic wrapping material prior to use or being sold. Therefore, would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to wrap the apparatus of Irwin to protect it from damage and keep it in "new" condition before it is used.

13. As to claim 9, Irwin teaches the claimed invention except for the use of plastic. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to use plastic, since it has been held to be within the general skill of a worker in the art to select a known material on the basis of its suitability for the intended use as a matter of obvious design choice. *In re Leshin* 125 USPQ 416.

Allowable Subject Matter

14. Claims 11-15 and 17-19 are allowable over the prior art of record.

15. The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter: the prior art of record fails to teach or render obvious the overall claimed invention of a helical suture instrument and apparatus having a first end and a second end, the first end comprising a spatulate member having a first length along a first axis; the helical suture instrument having a cylindrical axle defining a second axis and a helical portion, the helical portion having a helical outer diameter and having a second

axial length along the second axis, the second end of the apparatus comprising a guide shaped to receive the cylindrical axle for rotation on the second axis.

16. Claims 2, 3, and 5 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Contacts

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Michael G. Mendoza whose telephone number is (571) 272-4698. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon.-Fri. 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m..

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Glenn Dawson can be reached on (571) 272-4694. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

MM


GLENN K. DAWSON
PRIMARY EXAMINER